

New ideas make food services better

By Capt. Launa Hall
48th Services Squadron

New things and better service are the result of the work of the 48th Services Squadron food service team. They've added variety to boxed meals, fresh hot cookies at the Knights Table and a dessert extravaganza.

The team, which has 44 members, works to make the RAF Lakenheath dining facilities better and more enjoyable to their customers. Customers can even share their favorite recipes.

One of the new ideas was a complete change in the box meals services offers. The box meals are prepared for customers who can't make it to either of the dining facilities during meal times.

"We realized a lot of our customers have to eat box meals regularly, and we weren't providing enough variety," said TSgt. William Dame, food service superintendent. Box meals used to have only two kinds of sandwiches. Now, they offer four kinds with meat, three vegetarian sandwiches, hoagie rolls, salad and tomatoes.

"(The box meals) make a good meal, especially with the fresh fruit, desserts and healthy items we put into them," Dame said.

Regular Knights Table customers may

have noticed another improvement – fresh, hot cookies.

"We call them progressive cookies," said TSgt. Patrick Simmons, Knights Table manager. "We bake the cookies progressively through a meal, so any time you come in, you'll smell cookies coming out of the oven." The cookies are available during lunch at the Knights Table once a week.

"It definitely takes more time, but it's worth it," said Simmons. "The customers get an excellent dessert while it's still warm."

Dessert lovers can also enjoy the new dessert extravaganza at the Knights Table.

"(Even though) we always have dessert options available, we have many more on dessert-extravaganza days and we personally serve them to you," said Dame. Dessert extravaganza is offered monthly with the dinner meal.

Another new idea is the favorite recipe program, available to all customers.

"We're excited about this new program because it gives our customers the chance to get involved with what we serve them," said Capt. Sunshine Knutson, 48th SVS combat support commander.

Customers can write their favorite recipes on a form at the Knights Table.

As long as all the ingredients, measurements and cooking times are included and the form is signed, the food services team guarantees they will make every favorite recipe at least once.

"It can be a dessert, entree, salad, or anything at all," said Knutson. "If it sells well, we'll add it permanently to our recipe file."

The food services team must follow the Air Force worldwide menu. They do, however, have the flexibility to make unique dishes occasionally.

"If someone misses a dish from home, tell us the recipe," Knutson said. "We'll make it for you."

Because of their improvements and hard work, the 48th SVS food service operation recently won the United States Air Forces in Europe Food Service Excellence Award, and are now competitors for the worldwide Hennessy trophy.

"The competition couldn't come at a better time for us," said Lt. Col. Michael O'Dell, 48th SVS commander. "We have an outstanding team assembled, they produce consistently excellent meals, and all the new programs they have introduced show how dedicated they are to customer service."



Photos courtesy of the 48th Services Squadron

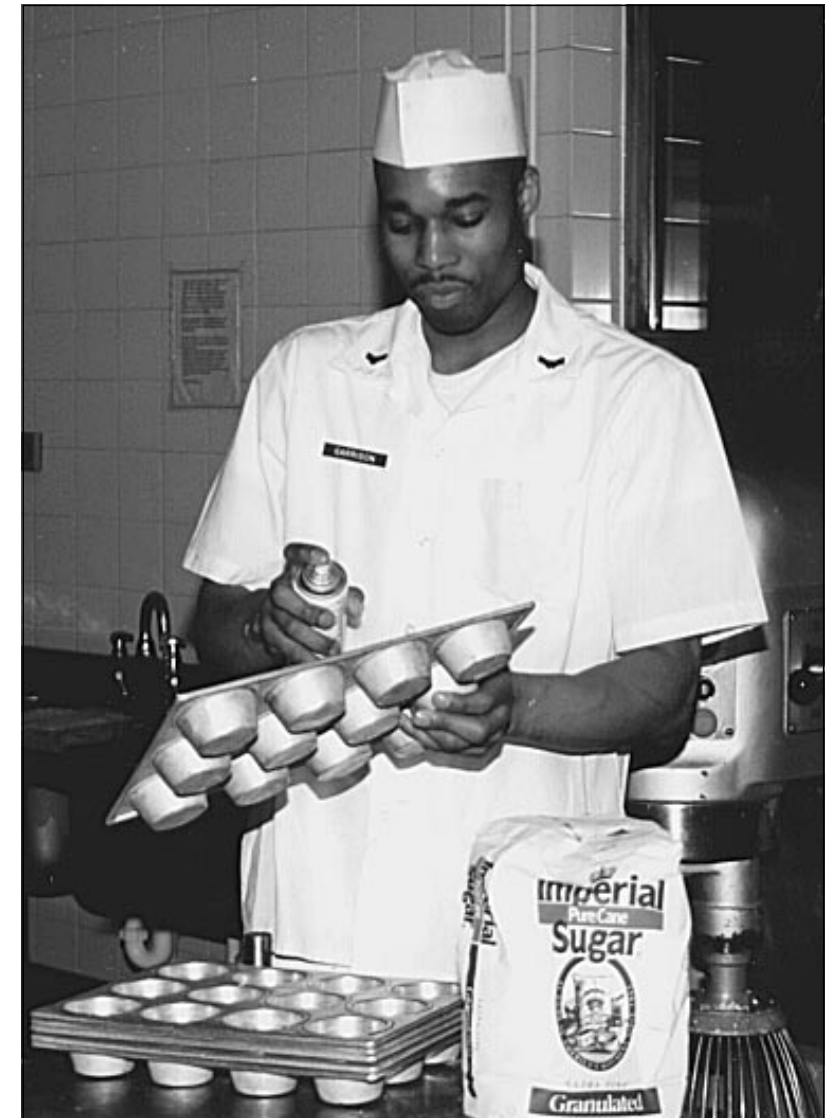
SrA. Jeffery Anderson, shift supervisor at the 48th Street Cafe, gets ready to serve French fries to customers.

Judging set

A team of Air Force judges arrives at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at RAF Lakenheath. They will evaluate the dining facilities Thursday and Feb. 7 in the competition for the best dining facility Air Force-wide.



A Knights Table customer creates a salad from the vast array of choices.



A1C Michael Garrison, a baker at the Knights Table, prepares to bake cupcakes.



A Knights Table customer samples the soup of the day.